



Habitat Herald

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Loudoun's Woodpeckers — Part I

by Nicole Hamilton

Woodpeckers are unique birds that have been around for approximately 50 million years. Their drumming, which to many Native Americans symbolized the heartbeat of the earth, can be heard in woods around the world as they are found on every continent except Australia and Antarctica.

Woodpeckers are unrivaled when it comes to finding and catching insects tucked under bark, hidden within wood, or burrowed under ground in tunnels. Their bills are adapted for hacking and chiseling. Their feet have two toes forward and two backward to help with grasping vertical surfaces of tree trunks, and their fourth toe can even go sideways. Their tails have stiff shafts that help prop them against the trees. Their skulls have extra cushioning to protect their brains from the constant impact of the drumming and drilling. Their tongues, which coil up into their skulls, are long and barbed to help snag insects hiding in crevices. Unique birds indeed.

Communication among woodpeckers is also special, as it is done through body movements, special calls, and drumming. With the ruffling of their crest feathers on the top of their heads they may warn another bird to stay away. With their head bobbing left and right they define territories and engage in courtship displays. With the raising of their wings in a v-shape as they perch on a tree trunk, they signal to competitors to stay away or be attacked. As with other birds, they have their contact calls and territory calls, and their loud voices often resound throughout the woods, but their drumming is unique to woodpeckers. The drumming, which is done on resonating surfaces, is used to define territories and attract mates and is done by males and females alike. They seek the best resonating surface on hollow trees in their territory — or sometimes the best resonance is found on gutters, garbage cans, or house siding! It should be noted that drumming is different from cavity excavation and foraging. When a woodpecker is drumming, no wood is excavated. Rather, it's the sound that matters and actual chiseling is left for other times.

This takes us to their other unique trait, and that is their ability to excavate cavities in trees for nesting and roosting.

Cavities are often used for years, in some cases by the pair that made them,



*Downy Woodpecker
Photo by Nicole Hamilton*

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A Word from the President

by Joe Coleman

Birding has become incredibly popular in the past 50 years, and much of the credit goes to Roger Tory Peterson. As I write this column in late August, birders and many others around the world are celebrating the centennial of Roger Tory Peterson's birthday and his impact on our natural world. Today, when there are numerous excellent field guides to choose from, it is hard to realize how accessible he made bird-watching when he wrote and illustrated his first guide. That radically different and easy-to-use field guide literally attracted thousands of new bird-watchers. And while many of us do argue over which guide is best, there is agreement that the *Peterson Field Guides to Birds* are still the best guides for beginners.

However, his books didn't just attract thousands of people to bird-watching, the enjoyment of birding that they engendered inspired millions of Americans to value and love nature. While we come to birding for many different reasons, most of us quickly learn what areas produce the most interesting bird sightings and how important the web of biodiversity is that underlies the most interesting and exciting areas. Before long we realize that if we don't protect the natural areas that support that biodiversity, we will lose much of what we value.

Using money we raised in our last Birdathons, we have begun work on a five-year bird atlas, concentrating on those that nest in Loudoun County. At the end of the project we plan to publish a *Birds of Loudoun* booklet which will include a section on Loudoun County's "Important Bird Areas." Our next task, and our most important one, will be to preserve and protect these areas.

To accomplish this task we have hired Spring Ligi to coordinate the project. Many of you will know Spring from her program on the nesting habits of both Baltimore and Orchard Orioles. To get a feel of the records that are available and what birds have already been documented in the county, Spring has completed for LWC a bird list of the birds of Loudoun County which should be available any day now.

LWC is very excited by this project which we think will make a difference in bird conservation here in Loudoun. You can be sure you will hear more about it in the years to come as we raise additional funds through our Birdathons and call on volunteers to help us document Loudoun County's birds.



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Editor: Karen Coleman
Mary Ann Good
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The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy Board meets the first Tuesday of each month. Board meetings are open to all current members. For more information, or to suggest topics for discussion at upcoming meetings, contact Joe Coleman.

President	Joe Coleman	(540) 554-2542	jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org
Vice President	Bonnie Eaton	(703) 726-3078	beaton@loudounwildlife.org
Secretary	Cheri Schneck	(703) 431-4225	cschneck@loudounwildlife.org
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Finance	Craig Himeligh	(703) 777-8691	chimeligh@loudounwildlife.org
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Fundraising	Vacant		
Environmental Education	Paul Miller	(540) 882-3112	pmiller@loudounwildlife.org
Public Relations Chair	Bonnie Eaton	(703) 726-3078	beaton@loudounwildlife.org
Volunteer Coordinator	vacant		
Conservation Advocacy	vacant		
Habitat Herald	Joe Coleman	(540) 554-2542	jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org
Community Outreach	Debbie Burtaine	(571) 434-0867	dburtaine@loudounwildlife.org
Stream Monitoring	Meg Findley	(703) 349-2831	mfindley@loudounwildlife.org
Bird Population Surveys	Joe Coleman	(540) 554-2542	jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org
Bluebird Monitoring	Elizabeth Evans	(540) 822-5438	eevans@loudounwildlife.org
Special Projects Ops	Phil Daley	(540) 338-6528	pdaley@loudounwildlife.org
Special Projects Admin	Karen Strick	(703) 283-2149	kstrick@loudounwildlife.org



■ *Hummingbirds, continued from pg. 1*

but also by numerous other species of animals. Birds such as bluebirds, nuthatches, Tufted Titmice, Tree Swallows, House Wrens, chickadees, owls, Wood Ducks, kestrels, and others will use woodpecker cavities for nesting. Flying Squirrels and Gray Squirrels use them for nesting as well.

Woodpeckers play a key role in our ecosystem as they help keep wood-boring insects in check, keeping trees healthy. Dead bark is loosened and dropped to the forest floor, making it more accessible for decomposition organisms to go to work and turn the bark into soil. Where woodpeckers have pecked and loosened bark, other birds like the brown creeper and chickadee follow to forage for remaining insects and spiders. Because owls will use woodpecker cavities, they indirectly help keep the rodent population of a woodlot in check as well. The biggest threats to our woodpeckers are habitat loss through forests that are cleared or harvested for mature trees and habitat removal by landowners who clean out dead standing trees from wood lots. Both of these activities deprive the birds of nesting sites and food. We need to let dead trees stand if we want to let the woodpeckers live. There are over 200 species of woodpeckers worldwide. Here in Loudoun, we are graced by the sights and sounds of seven species: Downy, Hairy, Red-bellied, Red-headed, Pileated, Northern Flicker, and the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. All of these except the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker are year-round residents. In addition to these residents, there was one accidental visit by a Lewis's Woodpecker that was recorded in Lucketts in 1989 — a very unusual occurrence since this woodpecker is typically found much further west. Below and in the next issue, we will take a look at these fascinating birds living in our forests and backyards, for while they have their similarities, they also have their special adaptations.

Downy Woodpecker: The Downy Woodpecker is our smallest and one of our most common woodpeckers and will readily come to feeders. It is often confused with the larger Hairy Woodpecker, whose longer, thicker bill distinguishes it from the Downy's short, sharp bill. For the sharp observer, you can determine how many individual Downies you have by studying the pattern on the backs of their head, since the pattern is unique like a fingerprint. Downy Woodpeckers are present here year-round, but they do make some seasonal shifts north and south so you may have different individuals in your yard at different times of the year. The territory of a Downy Woodpecker is about ¼ acre. If multiple pairs are in an area, their territories may overlap to some degree. Males typically forage at the top of the canopy while females do so at the mid-canopy. Through fall and winter, males and females will stay away from each other, with males even chasing females away. In late winter, however, males will start drumming as they declare their territories and advertise for a female. As mates are selected, the male and female Downy will gradually start to synchronize their activities and together will select a tree for excavation. If they do not agree on the tree, breeding may not occur that year, but if they do, the excavation and raising of young becomes their entire focus for the coming months. Nests are made 5 to 40 feet high, often toward the top of

a broken stub of a tree. With the nest complete, Downy Woodpeckers will spend 40% of their time at or near the nest. During incubation of the eggs, both parents participate and they do so in 30- to 60-minute shifts. When one flies up to the entrance to relieve the other, it lands on the side of the tree and taps to the mate inside, which gets the signal and flies out, allowing the other to enter. The male stays in the nest throughout the night. Once the young fledge, the parents will feed them for several weeks before they disperse. Throughout winter, Downy Woodpeckers mingle in mixed flocks with chickadees, nuthatches, and titmice. They are generally found in woodland edges and residential areas. In fall and winter, the Downy Woodpecker is the primary predator of the fruitfly larvae, which is especially found in goldenrod galls. They also feed on scale insects on birch trees and other insects hidden in bark. Poison ivy berries are a favorite food.



Hairy Woodpecker
Photo by Nicole Hamilton

Hairy Woodpecker: The Hairy Woodpecker looks similar to the Downy but is larger. It too has a territory of about ¼ acre that it defends for nesting, but it has a range for foraging of about 6–8 acres and prefers mature woods with extensive forest areas around. To defend its territory, the Hairy Woodpecker drums on “signal posts” located across its range which can include gutters and drain pipes but most often are resonant trees. The male and female of a pair will have two to four signal posts each that they use for drumming. Hairy Woodpeckers nest in living trees and put their cavities 10–40 feet off the ground. They especially like oak trees with a diameter of at least 8 inches but will use other trees of similar girth. Courtship and selection of a mate begins in January and lasts through April. Once a pair has bonded for the year, they will give a soft “tew-tew” call to each other to keep in contact through their range. As with other woodpeckers, they typically have just one brood per year. Both male and female incubate the eggs and they rarely leave the nest unattended. To alternate brooders, the incoming Hairy will perform a swoop flight up to the hole and may give a wing clap. This is followed

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■ Humminbirds, contined from pg. 3

by the “tew-tew” call at the entrance and head waving. The bird then hops to the side, allowing the bird inside to depart and they make the switch. The male broods throughout the night and the female relieves him at sunrise. After the young have fledged, the parents will only feed them for a few days, but they still stay within their parents’ range and ultimately may never go more than about a mile from their birthplace. Hairy Woodpeckers have longer tongues than Downies and therefore drill deeper in search of wood-boring insects and larvae. Watch the Hairy Woodpecker as it taps the tree to determine just where to drill. In addition to insects, the Hairy will also cache poison ivy berries in bark crevices and feed from the sap wells drilled by the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.



Red-bellied Woodpecker: The Red-bellied Woodpecker is our most common and comes readily to feeders. At first glance, you may question its name as the belly appears devoid of red, and in fact the Latin name for the Red-bellied Woodpecker is *Melanerpes carolinus*, which means “black creeper of the Carolinas.” It

has a black and white zebra-striped back and a broad swath of orange/red on its head, but with a careful eye, you can see the touch of rouge on the whitish midriff. One of the most interesting things about this woodpecker is its courtship display. The male begins with slow drumming and tapping along with loud “kwirr” calls. If the female is interested, she will join the male and begin tapping beside him. He then begins to chisel a cavity, and if she approves of the site, she keeps tapping beside him as he excavates in earnest. Both male and female will complete the excavation. When it comes time to incubate the eggs, both male and female pluck feathers from their lower bellies to create areas of bare skin called brood patches that they put over the eggs to warm them. Red-bellied Woodpeckers, while they feed on insects and spiders, are primarily vegetarians preferring nuts, seeds, corn, and fruits, even in summer when insects are plentiful. They are not big peckers of wood but prefer to glean from the surface and pick fruits and berries, especially enjoying the fruits of mulberry, Virginia creeper, and poison ivy, which they will cache along with nuts in tree crevices. Nests are excavated up high on a recently dead tree that still retains its bark or on a dead limb of a living tree. They often place their cavity on the underside of the limb, perhaps for protection from rain. When the babies fledge, they are still weak fliers and many fall prey to cats as well as Sharp-shinned and Coopers Hawks. The parents continue to care for them for about a month after fledging, helping to protect and feed them. Great Crested Flycatchers as well as kestrels use abandoned cavities as their nesting sites.

(To be continued in the Winter 2008 Habitat Herald.)

Sources:

A Guide to Bird Behavior, Vol I, II and III, by Donald and Lillian Stokes, 1989.

Lives of North American Birds, by Kenn Kaufman, 1996.

America’s Favorite Backyard Birds, George and Kit Harrison, 1989.

Woodpeckers of North America, Frances Backhouse, 2005.

Not Quite an Island

by Cliff Fairweather, Rust Nature Sanctuary Senior Naturalist

This article originally appeared in the August/September 2008 issue of the “Audubon Naturalist” newsletter and is reprinted here with the permission of the Audubon Naturalist Society. It has been edited slightly for the “Habitat Herald.”

Over my years at Rust Nature Sanctuary, although only in my very limited spare time, I have been compiling a record of box turtles on the property. The procedure is pretty simple: If I find a box turtle and I remembered to bring my camera that day, I take its picture.

Actually, it’s a little more systematic than that. I photograph the carapace (upper shell) and plastron (lower shell); shell patterns allow me to identify individuals. If it’s one of the bolder individuals and doesn’t immediately withdraw into its shell, I try to get a portrait as well. I also record the gender and the time, date, and





location found. Because I do this on a fairly haphazard basis, it's not surprising that I've identified only ten individuals since 2003. This, I believe, represents only a fraction of the likely total population. We have a lot of good box turtle habitat here.

From the ground, Rust seems well connected to other natural areas. But when I look at us on Google Earth, I see just how thin, and perhaps fragile, that connection is. We're not quite an island, but one of two changes in neighboring land use could cut us off as far as some species are concerned. Conservation biologists recognize that this sort of habitat fragmentation, the dicing of natural habitat into smaller and smaller bits separated by human-dominated landscapes, is the greatest threat to biodiversity today. Unfortunately, Loudoun County is no exception to an accelerating global trend towards greater habitat fragmentation.

In little more than half my lifetime, I've seen northeastern Loudoun go from largely rural to largely urban and the southeast seems to be catching up fast. Western Loudoun is still predominantly rural and contains much natural habitat, but for how long?

Habitat fragmentation is particularly hard on long-lived, slow reproducing, low mobility species with specific habitat needs, which describes box turtles pretty well. They can live fifty years or more, produce relatively few young, and have small home ranges

from which they usually do not venture very far. Although they use a variety of natural habitats, moist forest seems to be particularly important to them.

If Rust were completely cut off from other box turtle populations, not an entirely remote possibility, our local population would be at risk for slow extinction through inbreeding. That's one of the many risks habitat fragmentation poses to vulnerable populations. Loudoun County, however, still has time to consider how its development patterns affect local biodiversity and, more important, to take action to reduce and even reverse some of those effects.

Preservation of open space, particularly large areas of natural habitat, is an essential component of preserving biodiversity. But this is not sufficient by itself. Habitats need to be connected by corridors to allow for genetic exchange between populations. These and other elements of the Loudoun's green infrastructure need as much attention as the infrastructure of roads, wires, and residences. The alternative: increasing fragmentation of natural areas into islands that will no longer sustain Loudoun's biological endowment.



Check Out Our New Media!

by Nicole Hamilton

In addition to the *Habitat Herald* and our website, we now have three more ways to share information. Be sure to check out all of these and stay tuned for all updates on wildlife and habitats.

Monthly Email Announcement: Sent on the first of each month, the email announcement provides a listing of upcoming programs, field trips, and other events for that month, including updates that didn't make it into the *Habitat Herald*. To sign up, send an email to nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org and ask to be added to the monthly email list. Nicole Hamilton will then send you a confirmation, and you will be added after clicking on the link provided.

Weekly Podcast: Podcasts are audio files like having our own radio show, but you can listen to them on your computer or on an mp3 player (like an ipod) any time, any where you want. In our podcasts we talk about the lives and behaviors of local wildlife, interesting information about Loudoun's great natural places, activities for kids (of all ages) to explore nature, and interviews with local naturalists. You can download our podcasts or listen to them online. To learn more about podcasts and even listen to some past episodes, visit www.loudounwildlife.org/blog/category/podcasts/.

(Almost) Daily Blog: The Blog is where we are posting the latest habitat and wildlife news, field trip reports, book reviews, special activities and links, and nature id questions and facts. The Blog is

our place to share and comment on the wilds of Loudoun. You can subscribe to the Blog and receive an (almost) daily email by visiting www.loudounwildlife.org/blog/ and entering your email address in the subscribe block. After you submit this, you will receive a confirmation email with a link in it. After clicking the link, you will start receiving the (Almost) Daily Blog.

Your subscription to the Monthly Email Announcement is separate from your subscription to the (Almost) Daily Blog. So, if you would like to receive both, you will need to sign up for each of them. We hope you will join us in all of our forums. Each offers different information and opportunities to join together as a community, and we think you will get a lot from each one!

And don't forget to visit our **Website** — there are all sorts of new items, like the crossword puzzles (found on the Educational Resources page), the Google map of Loudoun's great places with mini-slide shows (also found on the Educational Resources page), the full catalog of our new t-shirts (found at the LWC Store), Google maps of our bluebird nestbox trails and stream monitoring sites (found on our Citizen Science pages), and updates on our latest habitat restoration events.

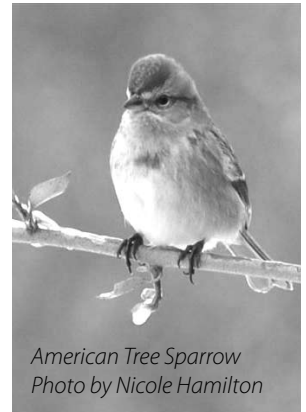
Central Loudoun Christmas Bird Count December 28, 2008

For three weeks every Christmas season, thousands of people spread out all over North America to count every wild bird they can find. The information from these bird counts all over the United States, Canada, Mexico, and parts of Central and South America is sent to the National Audubon Society (NAS). Working with the Cornell University School of Ornithology, NAS creates a database of the sightings. This data has been collected since 1899 and has become invaluable in monitoring bird populations and is the largest example of citizen science in the world. But these bird counts are not only science, they are also fun. People explore the country's natural areas and not-so-natural areas. The counters share their wonder of the wild beauty of feathered creatures with like-minded people, and sometimes they even find a truly rare bird. And while finding rarities is one of the most exciting aspects of these counts, there is no doubt that a wealth of helpful knowledge comes from the counts.

Join us on the **Twelfth Annual Central Loudoun Christmas Bird Count on Sunday, December 28** as we participate in this North American annual event. Our count-circle has a 15-mile diameter and covers 177 square miles of Loudoun's countryside: north to Waterford, south to Aldie, east to Ashburn, and west to Purcellville. The circle includes a number of very special natural areas such as the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve, the Dulles Wetlands, Beaverdam Reservoir, Morven Park, Ball's Bluff, several private large estates, about five miles of the C&O Canal and Potomac River in the vicinity of White's Ferry, and much of

still-rural western Loudoun County. Everyone is welcome — beginners are teamed up with experienced birders, and every eye helps! If you are interested in participating for the whole day or just a portion, contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org.

A \$5 fee for adult bird count participants (over 18) helps offset the cost of preparing this database and its publication in the CBC issue of American Birds.



*American Tree Sparrow
Photo by Nicole Hamilton*

Calmes Neck Christmas Bird Count - Sunday, January 4

There are other Christmas Bird Counts in Loudoun County besides the Central Loudoun CBC. The Calmes Neck CBC, which includes much of far-western Loudoun County, is scheduled for January 4. The count area includes a wide variety of habitat ranging from mountain forests to rural subdivisions to old farm fields and meadows, with the Shenandoah River running through it. If you would like to join the Calmes Neck CBC, please contact Margaret Wester at 540-837-2799 or margaretwester@hotmail.com. Also, Joe Coleman, joecoleman@rcn.com or 540-554-2542, and Phil Daley, pedaley@verizon.net or 540-338-6528, are sector leaders for the Calmes Neck CBC. Phil's area includes Round Hill and north, and Joe's area includes Bluemont south to Bloomfield. If you are interested in joining either of them, please contact each directly.



The Snickers Gap Hawkwatch Needs Your Help

The Snickers Gap Hawkwatch season officially began September 1 and will continue until December 1. Counters are needed as the watch still has many days not currently covered by volunteers. Both volunteers with experience and those willing to learn are welcome.

If you are interested, contact Joan Boudreau or Bob Abrams at 703-734-1238 or icepeep@aol.com or just come on up. The Hawkwatch is about 10 minutes west of Purcellville where Route 7 crosses the Loudoun-Clarke County line and the Appalachian Trail (AT) on the Blue Ridge Mountains near Bluemont (formerly Snickersville). The watch is adjacent to the highway (take a left at the top of the ridge on Rte 601 and an immediate right into the parking lot) and is conducted from

the parking lot serving both commuters and AT hikers. The Snickers Gap Hawkwatch is manned solely by volunteers and is one of several official watch sites in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. It is affiliated with the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA), which compiles the migration data of over 200 such sites located in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Typically, about 12,000 raptors are counted here each season. The highest seasonal count was over 23,000 in 1998. The birds are generally observed traveling in a southwesterly direction either directly over the ridge line or just off to either side, at varying heights and distances depending on weather conditions. They can be seen with the naked eye, but binoculars or a spotting scope are helpful for identification and, when possible, age and sex determination.

For more information on the Hawkwatch, visit: <http://mysite.verizon.net/rest39yt/virginiaareahawkwatchsites/index.html>.

Camel Cricket, *Ceuthophilus* sp.

by Kate Gentry

Have you ever found a large insect that looked like a cross between a spider and a cricket? Well, if it happened to be in a warm, moist place like your basement, then it was probably the Camel Cricket. Camel Crickets are sometimes known as Cave Crickets and are very unique. They get their name from their hump-like back. Their heads arch downward between their front legs, and their antennae are longer than their bodies. Like other crickets, they are good jumpers and are varying shades of brown. However, unlike other crickets, they are unable to chirp and have no wings. They survive as nymphs in the winter and look the same through their whole life cycle, with the exception of their size.

Camel Crickets are more active at night and prefer areas that have high humidity and moisture. Outdoors, these crickets can be found in wood or stone piles, tall grass, tree hollows, ground holes, and caves. During dry spells, they seek moisture and may turn up in laundry rooms or garages.

They are sometimes viewed as pests because of their tendency to eat fabrics and sometimes houseplants when desperate for food. Otherwise, they are mostly considered nothing more than a nuisance. Seeing one is nothing to be alarmed about, so instead

of smashing it or resorting to some kind of extermination, just pick it up and let it go outside.



Photo by Hustvedt in Wikipedia.

Obviously, Camel Crickets should not be considered a threat or a pest. They are really neat to look at, so if you ever get the chance, take the time to look at it before letting it go. Insects get a bad rap, but I see no reason to not co-exist with such a benign neighbor.

Resources:

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LWC's 12th Annual Butterfly Count Report

by Nicole Hamilton

Our 12th Annual Butterfly Count on August 3 was an amazing success! Going into the count, many of us felt as though butterfly numbers and species were down this year. The rains seemed to cause some plants to bloom later, such as the Joe Pye Weed. The butterflies seemed slow to show up in our gardens and there were certain species that we weren't seeing at all. But, conducting the count told a different story, showing once again the benefit of going out and systematically gathering the data.

Watching and counting butterflies, we are reminded of the interwoven relationships between plants and animals. With butterflies in particular we see this relationship in two stages of their lives: first as the butterflies lay their eggs on host plants and the caterpillars feed on them as they develop; and then as the butterflies themselves nectar on flowering plants such



as thistles, New York Ironweed, milkweed, Black-eyed Susan, coneflowers, Joe Pye Weed, and more.

To set the stage, we should note that the weather this year has been marked by a balance between rain and sun. This is compared to the past few years where we have had high temperatures and drought conditions. Having such a mix of rain and sun can be good for plants which the butterflies require, but it can also be good for the predators of butterflies and caterpillars, such as parasitic wasps and assassin bugs.

For the first time in our 12 years of conducting the count, the rain interfered with our plans. As we arose early on Saturday morning, we were in the midst of a downpour and the forecast called for continued thunderstorms throughout the morning and into the afternoon. Not only are these conditions not fun for counters, but they cause the butterflies to hunker down in trees and shrubs to take shelter. So, through email and calling all 60 people who signed up for the count, we postponed to Sunday. Unfortunately that meant that about 20 of our planned participants could not join us, but it did allow for a beautiful day to conduct the count. Perfect butterfly count weather is mid-80s to low-90s, and that was just what we had on Sunday, along with a slight breeze to cool the counters.

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Butterfly Count, continued



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail

Our counters joined up in six teams across the count circle, covering areas that included Rust Sanctuary, Ida Lee Park, Rockland Farm, Temple Hall Farm, Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (BRCEs), Appalachian Trail Road, Franklin Park, Fields of Flowers, Butterfly Hill Farm, Waterways, the Phillips Farm, and private properties throughout Waterford, Lincoln, and areas south.

In total we identified 2,903 individual butterflies this year. This count follows an upward trend that we've had over the past two years, which is great to see. In 2005 we saw over 5,000 individual butterflies but then in 2006 that number plummeted to 2,452. Since then our numbers have been headed back up.

Even more encouraging was this year's diversity of species – our highest number yet: 55 in total, and some of these were quite rare. A new record for our count, identified by Mona Miller and her team, was a Clouded Skipper at Butterfly Hill Farm. We knew they were present in Loudoun from USGS data, but this is the first time we have been able to record it on the count. Other notable rarities include the Giant Swallowtail, spotted in two locations, the American Snout, and the high number of Juniper Hairstreaks. This year also saw the highest number of Zebra Swallowtails, indicating that it was also a great year for the Paw Paw tree, the host plant for this butterfly. Paw Paw, a wetland species often found along streams, must have done well with the increased rain this year. This was also the year for the highest number of Eastern-tailed Blues, a pretty little butterfly which feeds on clover and other plants in the pea family as a caterpillar.

There were some obvious species missing or very low this year as well. Most notable were the decreased numbers of Red-spotted Purples and Eastern Tiger Swallowtails. With the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, we had 289 this year, compared to almost 500 in

each of the past 3 years; and with the Red-spotted Purple, we saw only 1 this year. The Red-spotted Purple in particular has been in decline over the past few years. Our count had been 50 to 79 for most of the past decade but just 10–13 in the past 2 years. This year, only seeing one is a bit concerning. Both the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail and the Red-spotted Purple use the Black Cherry tree as their host plant, which continues to thrive. We are unsure as to why these species are down but will continue to watch this trend and hope for an up-tick next year.

It's fascinating to look at the data from year to year, and we invite you to review it yourself, think about the host plants and nectar plants that the different species rely upon for survival as well as our weather patterns and development in Loudoun, and then look at the numbers and trends from the past 12 years. To view the data, visit our website at www.loudounwildlife.org/Butterfly_Count_Summary_Data.htm.

Many thanks to all 48 of our participants for making this such a great day and spotting so many butterflies: Dale Ball, Bob Blakney, Fred and Ann Bogar, Linda Bowman, Jo-Anne Burlew, Amanda Clayton, Casey Crichton, Toni Crouch, Phil Daley, Clarice Dieter, Dana Eddy, Cliff Fairweather, Holly Flannery, Tony and Ann Garvey, Nicole Hamilton, Dirck Harris, Robin Hoofnagle, Allison, Doug and Luke Hubbard, Sharon Kearns, Jeanne Levy, Jon Little, Karen Lowe, Bob Lyon, Brian Magurn, Tammi Marcollier and her two children (Alexandra and Mia), Larry Meade, Mona Miller, Frank Mullin, Gary and Matt Myers, Natalie Pien, Aaron Scurloch and his four children (Josh, Lindsey, Brian, and Ashley), Ray Smith, Sally Snidow, Helen Van Ryzin, Joey Villiari, Marcia Weidner, and Mimi Westervelt.

Having completed the tally of our count, we will submit our data and findings to the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) so that our local Loudoun data can be aggregated with that from other counts that took place in July and August across the country. NABA will then do their own analysis of data regionally and nationwide to track the populations of our North American butterflies.



Black Swallowtail

Poison Ivy, *Toxicodendron radicans*

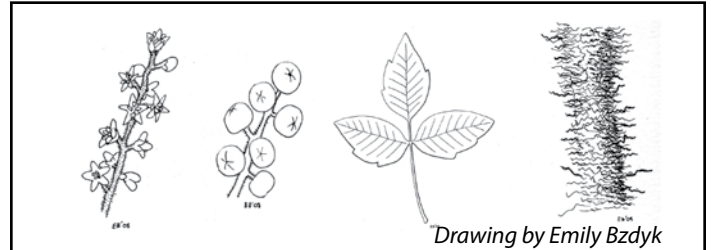
by Kerry Bzdyk

It's the plant we all love to hate. If it's growing in our yards, we just want it gone. But this native plant, about which myths abound, does have some positive attributes.

Poison Ivy is a deciduous plant that is native to North America and a member of the cashew family. It is most recognizable by its configuration of three leaflets. It emerges in the spring with reddish leaves that turn shiny green during the summer and finally to red, orange, or yellow in the fall. It can grow as a vine along the ground, as a small shrub, or it can climb up trees, walls, and fences, attaching itself with its distinctive, hairy looking and woody stem. The small white, sweet-smelling blossoms appear in June followed by clusters of white berries in July. These berries are eaten by birds, deer, and rodents, all of which help to reseed new plants.

Poison Ivy is a master of disguises and can appear very different depending on the conditions in which it is growing. It prefers edges of wooded areas, but is quite adaptable to survive a variety of habitats. The leaflets vary in size and can be notched or smooth edged. It can be very dark green or pale. It is worth learning to recognize in all its forms and is best avoided because of its toxic oil. The website www.poison-ivy.org/ has some great pictures of poison ivy in its varied appearances. One of the more distinctive features is the aerial roots that look almost hairy and can be seen on the climbing version.

It is the oil (called urushiol) in Poison Ivy that causes the contact dermatitis rash in sensitive people (it is also important to note that even non-sensitive individuals can develop sensitivity after repeated exposures). Reactions can vary from a small rash to a trip to the emergency room. One of the most dangerous types of exposure is breathing the smoke from burning plants. This can be life threatening. The oil is present in most parts of the plant, which explains why you can get the rash even during the winter if you come in contact with the dormant vine. The oil can be spread to humans through direct contact with the plant or indirect contact, such as petting a cat or dog who has brushed against the plant. The worst case I ever had I got from my cat! If



you know that you have been exposed to Poison Ivy, you may avoid the reaction by getting the oil off your skin before it has time to penetrate (usually an hour or two). What is commonly recommended and has always worked in our house is a cool shower with plenty of water and a soap that will cut through the oil (we use dish detergent!). Once you have the rash, there are prescription remedies available that can speed up the healing process and reduce the severity.

Still waiting to hear about its good points? While I admit that this is a tough plant to love, its fruit is very popular with wildlife and it really is one of the prettiest vines in the fall when it turns amazing colors. My favorite is an old vine that is climbing a huge white pine not far from my home. The bright red-orange leaves within the cloak of feathery evergreen make a spectacular sight. So look for it this fall and enjoy the visual effect — from a distance!

Resources:

<http://nac.tamu.edu/x075bb/caddo/poison.html>
<http://poisonivy.aesir.com/view>
www.poison-ivy.org/



Yes, I want to become an LWC Member!

Membership Benefits include:

Subscription to Habitat Herald • Classes and Workshops
 Volunteer Opportunities • Regular Monthly Meetings and Programs

Join online: www.loudounwildlife.org



Programs and Field Trips

Space is limited for many of these programs and field trips. Please call the designated program contact for further information and to reserve your spot.



LOUDOUN WILDLIFE CONSERVANCY BOARD MEETING

– LWC’s Board normally meets the first Tuesday of every month at ANS’s Rust Nature Sanctuary. All LWC members are welcome. Pre-meeting discussion begins at 7:00 p.m., with the meeting itself beginning at 7:30 p.m. **Contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org for additional information.**

MID-WEEK BIRD WALK AT HORSEPEN PRESERVE (EASTERN LOUDOUN) – Wednesday, October 15, 8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Registration Required. Join Joe Coleman and Linda Sieh for one of LWC’s free mid-week walks. Horsepen Preserve is a large, natural area that borders the Potomac River, immediately to the west of Algonkian Park. **To register or for more information contact Joe Coleman at jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org or 540-554-2542.**

BIRDING SOUTHWESTERN LOUDOUN COUNTY – Saturday, October 18, 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. **Registration Required.**

Join Joe Coleman and Andy Rabin as they search, by car pool, the southwestern corner of Loudoun County for birds. This part of Loudoun County is still largely rural with large farms bordered on the west by the Blue Ridge. Meet to car pool and explore several different rural roads. **To register or for more information contact Joe Coleman at jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org or 540-554-2542.**

FAMILY STREAM DAY – Saturday, October 18, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The 7th annual “Exploring Our Streams Day,” planned by Loudoun Watershed Watch and co-hosted with the Loudoun Environmental Stewardship Alliance (LESA), kicks off with the grand opening of Loudoun Water’s new Aquary, a great educational exhibit on water. Come and experience the many ways you can help keep Loudoun’s Streams clean by smart landscaping, stormwater and erosion control, water conservation, stream assessment and monitoring, and more. Rain or shine. Location: Loudoun Water, 44865 Loudoun Water Way, Ashburn, VA. **For more information and directions visit www.loudounwatershed-watch.org/subitem4_9.html.**

IDENTIFYING HAWKS: A CLASS AND A FIELD TRIP TO WAGGONER’S GAP, PA. October 29 and November 1. **Registration Required.** Each fall hawks migrate south along the Blue Ridge. On Wednesday, October 29, Liam McGranaghan, a master falconer, licensed bander of raptors, and educator, will teach a 7:00 evening class on how to identify hawks and other birds of prey in the field. On Saturday, November 1, we will take a field trip to Waggoner’s Gap in PA, about a 2.5 hour drive. Waggoner’s Gap is one of the premier hawk-watching sites in our area, and if the weather cooperates, we should see a wide diversity of birds of prey. While the field trip will be free and one does not need to take the class to go on the field trip, there is a fee of \$10 (\$15 for non-members) for the class, and priority for the field trip will be given to those taking the class. Registration is required (\$10/ member or \$15/non-member fee for the class) – contact Laura Weidner at lweidner@loudounwildlife.org to sign up.

EXPLORING FALL – Sunday, November 2, 10:00 a.m. – noon. **Registration Required.** Join Phil Daley as he explores the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship in fall. During this free family hike, we will look at how plants and animals prepare for winter. Also, come and enjoy the fall foliage in this heavily forested preserve. The Blue Ridge Center comprises 900 acres of field, forest and mountainside on the west side of Harpers Ferry Road in northwestern Loudoun County. Meet at the Neersville Volunteer Fire Station on Rt. 671 at 10:00 a.m. **To register contact Phil Daley at 540-338-6528 or pdaley@loudounwildlife.org.**

BIRDING BANSHEE & THE DULLES GREENWAY WETLANDS MITIGATION PROJECT – Saturday, November 8, 8:00 a.m. – noon. Join LWC, the Friends of Banshee Reeks, and the Audubon Naturalist Society for the free monthly bird walk at the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve. Because of its rich and varied habitat, this part of the county is a birding hot spot. After the walk at Banshee

Birding Banshee!

Join LWC and the Friends of Banshee Reeks at the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve for the monthly bird walk. Because of its rich and varied habitat, this part of the county is a birding hot spot. Please bring binoculars. **Questions: contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org.**



Saturday, October 11
Saturday, November 8
Saturday, December 13
Saturday, January 10

Walks begin
at 8:00 a.m.

Reeks, we will check out the close-by Dulles Wetlands. Please bring binoculars. **Questions: contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org.**

CITIZEN SCIENCE CELEBRATION – AMPHIBIANS, BLUEBIRDS, AND STREAM MONITORING. Saturday, November 9, noon – 4:00 p.m. (location TBD). Registration Required. Join us as we celebrate the accomplishments of our monitoring volunteers! Meet fellow monitors, share experiences from the field, look at photographs, hear about the different program areas and discuss ideas about how we can make our monitoring even better for next year. With bluebird monitoring, we will say farewell to our bluebirds, tree swallows, and house wrens as we celebrate another great season of these birds raising their young. Meet fellow bluebird monitors and hear reports from trail leaders on fledgling tallies for each of the trails. With amphibian monitoring, we will highlight our successes in gathering information in critical vernal pool areas and in working with the county to identify areas that should be protected. We will also talk about the benefit of the population data that we are starting to see. Free copies of our Amphibian Monitoring Program posters will be available. In the area of stream monitoring, we will recognize our volunteers who are helping reshape and relaunch this important program with new monitoring protocols this year. We will also have a mini-bug fest as we take a look at and talk about different insects seen in our streams and how they are an indicator of water quality. Current volunteers as well as anyone interested in finding out more about our amphibian, bluebird and stream monitoring programs are welcome. This is potluck, so please bring a dish to share. LWC will provide plates, utensils and beverages. **Please register online at www.loudounwildlife.org/SignUp.htm or contact Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton@loudounwildlife.org or 540-882-9638.**

Birding the Blue Ridge Center

On the fourth Saturday of each month, LWC leads a free bird walk at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship (BRCES). This beautiful 900-acre preserve is located on Harpers Ferry Road, Rt. 671, in northwestern Loudoun County. Only a few miles south of Harpers Ferry and the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers, the property includes meadows in the valley and heavily forested slopes on the Blue Ridge. Meet at the Neersville Volunteer Fire Station on Rt. 671 at 8:00 a.m. **Questions: contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org**

Saturday, October 25

Saturday, November 22

Saturday, January 24



SUNDAY IN THE PRESERVE

Join LWC and the Friends of Banshee Reeks for a free informal, family walk around the preserve. Search for the many natural wonders that make this such a special place. For information call the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve at 703-669-0316.

Sunday, October 19, 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, November 16, 1:00 p.m.

AUTUMN TREES AT BANSHEE REEKS NATURE PRESERVE – Saturday,

November 15, 1:00 p.m. Trees and wildflowers are stripped down in winter, rather than bundled up like us, giving them a special beauty in their shapes, symmetry and color.

Local plant ecologist and author of *People and the Land Through Time*, Dr. Emily Southgate, will lead a walk to look at how these plants survive the winter, already prepared for spring, and will discuss how to identify many wildflowers and trees in their winter condition in varied habitats. **Questions: contact Dr. Emily Southgate at ewbsouthgate@gmail.com or 540-687-8291.**



■ Continued on page 12

■ *Programs and Field Trips, continued*

"RHAPSODY IN BLUE, A CELEBRATION OF NORTH AMERICAN WATERBIRDS" – Tuesday, November 18, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Join us at the Leesburg Safety Center for a wonderful program presented by nature photographer Middleton Evans, who will discuss and show images from his latest book, "Rhapsody in Blue, A Celebration of North American Waterbirds." This free program is sponsored by LWC. Come at 7:00 p.m. to meet the speaker and have light refreshments. Seating is limited. The program will start at 7:30 p.m. **Questions: contact Laura Weidner at lweidner@loudounwildlife.org or 540-229-2816.**

MID-WEEK BIRD WALK IN THE LUCKETTS AREA – Wednesday, November 19, 8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Join LWC on this free, mid-week birding trip in the Lucketts area as we drive some of the dirt roads looking for migrants and other signs of fall. Until recently this was one of Loudoun County's richest birding areas because of its farm land and proximity to the Potomac River, and it still occasionally reveals a jewel or two. Meet at the Lucketts Community Center parking lot to car pool. **Questions: contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org.**

DUCKS AT THE DULLES GREENWAY WETLANDS MITIGATION PROJECT – Saturday, December 6, 8:00 a.m. Registration Required. Join Phil Daley and Paul Miller as they visit the Dulles Greenway Wetlands looking for the many waterfowl species who visit there during the winter months. The Wetlands has proven to be an important winter stopover for many ducks and geese as they flee from their northern breeding areas. Meet at the wetlands gate along Route 650 at 8:00 a.m. Bring binoculars and scopes, dress for the weather, and wear shoes/boots that are waterproof. Limited number of participants. **To register contact Phil Daley at 540-338-6528 or pedaley@verizon.net.**

BIRDING THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY – Sunday, December 7, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Registration Required. Clark County in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley is rich with excellent birding areas. Join Joe Coleman and Laura Weidner on a daylong search for hawks, sparrows, waterfowl, and other seasonal birds in the northeastern section of the Valley. Meet at the Snicker's Gap

Hawkwatch in the Blue Ridge Mountains on the Loudoun/Clarke County border. From there we will move along the Shenandoah River, and visit the Virginia State Arboretum and Blandly Farm. The day will end with a return to Snicker's Gap Hawkwatch to see what is moving overhead. All levels of birders are welcome. This field trip is cosponsored with the Audubon Naturalist Society.

Pre-registration required: Members (ANS & LWC): \$29; Nonmembers: \$41. To register contact ANS at 301-652-9188 x16.

ANNUAL CENTRAL LOUDOUN CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

– **Sunday, December 28.** Join us as we participate in the National Audubon Society's Annual Christmas Bird Count. Started in 1899, these surveys are held all over the country, with the results used to better understand bird populations and dynamics. LWC's count-circle has a 15-mile diameter and covers 177 square miles of Loudoun's countryside: north to Waterford, south to Aldie, east to Ashburn, and west to Purcellville. This part of Loudoun County includes areas that not only have beautiful scenery but also are full of birds. Everyone is welcome, both beginners and expert birders (amateurs are teamed with experienced birders). **If you are interested in participating for the whole day or just part of the day, contact Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org.**

CALMES NECK CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT – Sunday, January 4.

There are several Christmas Bird Counts in Loudoun County besides the Central Loudoun CBC. The Calmes Neck Christmas Bird Count, which includes much of far western Loudoun County, is scheduled for January 4. This count area includes a wide variety of habitat ranging from mountain forests to rural subdivisions to old farm fields and meadows, with the Shenandoah River running through it. If you would like to join the Calmes Neck Christmas Bird Count, please contact Margaret Wester at 540-837-2799 or margaretwester@hotmail.com. (Joe Coleman, joecoleman@rcn.com or 540-554-2542, and Phil Daley, pedaley@verizon.net or 540-338-6528, are sector leaders for the Calmes Neck CBC. Phil's area includes Round Hill and north, and Joe's area includes Bluemont south to Bloomfield. If you are interested in joining either of them, please contact each directly.)



Questions about the above programs?

Contact Laura Weidner at lweidner@loudounwildlife.org or 540-554-2747.

For up-to-date information on our programs check our web site at **www.loudounwildlife.org**

Programs and Field Trips - *Sponsored By Our Partners*

AUDUBON NATURALIST SOCIETY RUST NATURE SANCTUARY
802 Children's Center Rd, Leesburg, VA 20175; 703-669-0000.

Come and enjoy the Rust Nature Sanctuary anytime from dawn to dusk, seven days a week, any day of the year. Our 68 acres encompasses meadows, forests, and ponds where you will find a variety of wildlife and plants.

Trees on the Town: Leesburg's Urban Forest — Wed., Nov. 5, 7:30 – 8:45 p.m.

Learn the results of Leesburg's recent Urban Tree Canopy assessment from urban forester and president of Virginia's Urban Forest Council, Jay Banks. He will explain how this assessment was done using cutting-edge technology, what it tells us about Leesburg's urban forest today, and how it can guide us in the future. Space is limited for this free program so **RSVP early at 703-737-0021.**

Rust Through the Seasons

Explore the Rust Nature Sanctuary through the seasons with a naturalist. Each walk will focus on seasonal phenomena at the sanctuary and include discussions of the ecology behind our observations. Intended for adults and children over 10. **Fee: \$5.00/program or any three for \$10.00 – payable at the start of the walk. RSVP 703-737-0021 – space is limited.**

● **Fall(ing) in the Forest — Sat, Nov. 15, 9:30 a.m. – noon.**

From fall colors to tiny organisms turning those leaves into soil, explore autumn at the Rust forests.

● **Baby, It's Cold Outside! — Sun., Jan. 18, 1 – 3:30 p.m.**

Discover the survival strategies organisms use to get through the winter in our fields, forests, and wetlands.

Rust Nature Sanctuary Free Walks

Free nature walks for adults and older children with an interest in expanding their understanding of local nature. Call 703-737-0021 for more information. Please note changes to our previous schedule (in **boldface**)!

● **Saturday at the Sanctuary:** Naturalist-led walks with a seasonal theme, **1st Saturday of each month, 9:00-10:30 a.m.**

● **Midweek Rust Rambles:** Explore Rust with a naturalist, 2nd Wed. each month, **Mar. through Nov., 10 – 11:30 a.m.**

● **Rust Bird Walks for Beginners:** Learn birding basics, 3rd Sat. each month, Sept. through June, **8 – 9 a.m.**

Family Programs at Rust

Every Tuesday, 10:00-11:00AM: Ages 3-5 with an adult. First Tuesday FREE; Every other Tuesday: \$5 per child. Call 703-669-0000 or email julieg@audubonnaturalist.org to register.

● **Oct:** 7: Creepy Critters
14: Happy Hoppers
21: Nighttime Fliers: (special night time program 8 PM)
28: Spider Sensations

● **Nov:** 4: Fall Fun
11: Colors in Nature
18: Migration Madness
25: Finding food in fall and winter

Broadlands Nature Center: ANS, in partnership with the Broadlands Association, is offering the following at 21907 Claiborne Parkway in Broadlands. Please inquire about cost when you call 703-729-9704 to sign up.

- **Nature in Disguise** (A Mommy, Me, and Nature makes 3 program) Oct. 14, 10-11am 12 months-3 years.
- **"Duck id @ the Walkway"** Oct 15, 3-4 pm 6-8 yr olds.
- **"Wiggly Worms"** Nov 4, 4:30-5:30 pm 8 & 9 yr olds.
- **"Soil Sort"** Nov. 5, 10-11 am 4 and 5 yr olds.
- **"Nature Stories, crafts, and Songs"** (A Mommy, Me, and Nature makes 3 program) Nov. 18, 10-11 am 12 months-3 years.
- **"Eco Elf workshop"** Dec 7, 1-4 pm plus popcorn & movie Ages 4 & up.
- **"Nature Gifts"** Dec 10, 4-5 pm Ages 4 & up.



CLAUDE MOORE PARK NATURE PROGRAMS

Visitor Center: 21544 Old Vestal's Gap Road, Sterling, VA 20164

www.loudoun.gov/prcs/parks/claude.htm

Visitor Center/Discovery Room: Daily 9:00A-5:00P

Park Hours: Daily 7:00A-Dusk

Enjoy the change of the seasons as you explore the forests, meadows and ponds at Claude Moore Park. Preschoolers can discover nature up close. Scouts can earn badges on the trails and in Frogshackle Nature Center. Call 571-258-3700 for information about these and other activities or to register. A sample of the park's naturalist-led programs:

■ *Continued on page 14*

Animal Talk: Monday, 10/20 9:30A-11:00A or 12:30P- 2:00P
(Ages 3-6) Frogs croak, birds chirp and bees buzz and dance!
Discover the secret languages of wild animals. \$10.50/child

Pumpkin Fun: Monday, 10/27 9:30A-11:00A or 12:30P- 2:00P
(Ages 3-6) Pumpkins mean fall! We'll look at their seeds, search for
other wild fall fruits and play pumpkin games. \$10.50/child

Explore Native American Pottery: Wednesday, 11/12 3:30P-
5:00P (Ages 6-10) The art of pottery making has been around for
thousands of years. Examine archaeological artifacts and deco-
rate clay like the Indians did. \$10.50/child



Going Batty at Twilight:
Friday, 10/24 6:00P- 8:00 P
(Ages 7 & up) As the sun goes
down, the mosquito eaters
come out, each ridding us
of thousands of pests each

night. Discover bats and their many benefits through stories and
activities, and then take a night walk in search of these wonderful
night fliers. Children must be accompanied by an adult.
\$5.00/person

Stories and Songs of Fall Harvest Campfire: Saturday, 10/25
6:00P- 8:00P (All ages) Fall brings in the harvest from the sum-
mer sun and toil: a time of rejoicing and sharing. Join a naturalist
around the warming community fire to learn some of the stories
and songs that early American Indians and pioneers shared
during this time of bounty. Bring a toasting stick and roast some
marshmallows and enjoy some popcorn and cider (provided).
Children must be accompanied by an adult. \$5.00/person.



Volunteer Appreciation

Despite the heat, the 2008 **Loudoun Wildlife Festival**
succeeded in attracting a crowd who enjoyed the music
and the amphibian zoo and who generously contributed
donations. Funds raised will be used by LWC to continue
its mission. We want to especially thank Helen Van Ryzin for
coordinating the event and also to thank the bands (*in italics*), our
sponsors, the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship,
and the many volunteers who made the concert a success:

<i>Acoustic Burgoo</i>	Nicole Hamilton	Andrew Sedlins
Attila Agoston	Warren & Mary Hayford	<i>The Stringsmiths</i>
Apple House	Foundation	Michelle Stulga
Carpentry	Liam McGranaghan	Jay Votel
Rudy Bzydk	<i>Andrew McKnight</i>	Ben Walters
Candi Crichton	Chris Meudt	Laura Weidner
Casey Crichton	Mark Meudt	Katie Wolcott
Phil Daley	Paul Miller	Melissa Wright
Shawna DeWitt	Mr. Print	Allison Young
<i>Dirty River</i>	One Horse Town	

Because the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is an all-volunteer
organization, any accomplishment, large or small, is due to the
efforts of our volunteers. Thank you to our other volunteers who
contributed their time and talents to many projects this quarter:

Sarah Ali	Emily Bzydk	Phil Daley
Lorrie Bennett	Kerry Bzydk	Bonnie Eaton
Daniel Biggs	Connie Cahill	Elizabeth Evans
Gem Bingol	Michael Carr	Cliff Fairweather
Richelle Brown	Joe Coleman	Darci Fernholz
Debbie Burtaine	Karen Coleman	Meg Findley
Lloyd Burtaine	Ellie Daley	Scott Findley

Patty Fisher	Nancy Kirschbaum	Sandy Ruefer
Eleanora Florance	Spring Ligi	Scott Sandberg
Michael Friedman	Karen Lowe	Del Sargent
Ann Garvey	Brian Magurn	Cheri Schneck
Tony Garvey	Liam McGranaghan	Karen Strick
Jean Gentry	Virginia McGuire	Lisa Taylor
Kate Gentry	Barbara McKee	James Tracy
Neil Gentry	Frank McLaughlin	Helen Van Ryzin
Margaret Good	Larry Meade	Joey Villari
Mary Ann Good	Lee Meyer	Nancy Walker
Debra Gutenson	Scott Meyer	David Ward
Otto Gutenson	Mona Miller	Lynn Webster
Gil Hamilton	Paul Miller	Laura Weidner
Nicole Hamilton	Kevin Monroe	Marcia Weidner
Senia Hamoui	Mr. Print	Marianne Weitzel
Craig Himelright	Andy Rabin	Mimi Westervelt
Tammy Himelright	Niko Rabin	Susan Young
Elliott Kirschbaum	Jen Roberts	

This list covers the time period from mid-June through mid-
August, but does not include those who helped with other
projects listed elsewhere in this issue or our bluebird or
amphibian monitoring, as those will be fully reported in our next
issue. We apologize if we have omitted or misspelled anyone's
name. If we have, please let Joe Coleman know at jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org or 540-554- 2542.

LWC is looking for a Volunteer
Coordinator — if you think you
might be interested please contact
Joe Coleman at jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org or 540-554-2542.

**We can't
do it
without
you!**



Adventures of Zoom & Compass

Spiders, Spiders . . . Oh, My!

by Senia Hamoui

It was dark in the basement, with only a sliver of moonlight shining through a small window. Nature Detectives Zoom and Compass turned on their flashlights and began their new adventure.

"Follow me," whispered Compass. "Tabitha said she saw a Tarantula in the corner by the bathroom—just 110 degrees SW." He turned his flashlight in that direction and nearly fell backward at what he saw. "Look at all those eyes shining back at us!"

"It's just tapetum," said Zoom calmly. "That'll help with identifying our little friend. You did bring your field guide—didn't you?"

"Of course!" Compass whisked out a laminated guide from the side pocket of his pants. "Tapetum? Now you're making up words for UNOs?"

"Oh, brother!" she said as she rolled her eyes. "I didn't make it up—it's a layer of cells in back of the eye that reflects light coming in. It helps animals see better in the dark."

"You mean eyeshine, and only a few spiders have it!" exclaimed Compass. "It's a clue!"

"Here's another," said Zoom as she looked through her magnifying glass. "There isn't a web."

"Then it isn't a common house or garden spider," replied Compass. "If it were, it'd be sitting near the center of a sticky web waiting for its prey, sensing vibrations through the thousands of tiny hairs on its body and legs. Once caught, the spider's venom would paralyze the prey and digestive juices would turn the insides into mush."

"Uh—thank you for your lovely explanation of why it isn't a web spider," said Zoom. "That leaves a hunting spider which uses methods other than a web to catch prey."

"You're welcome," replied Compass with a grin. "Could it be a crab spider?"

"No, the four front legs would be longer than the back ones and the body would be flatter," answered Zoom. "I don't think it's a Daddy Longlegs either."

"Careful not to confuse the Daddy Longlegs with the Harvestman which isn't a true spider," noted Compass. "Spiders have eight legs, two body parts, and the ability to produce silk. The Harvestman has eight legs but just one body part, and it can't make silk."

"I can't believe I'm saying this, Compass—you're right."

"Of course I am! Maybe Tabitha is right, too, about it being a Tarantula. It is pretty hairy," Compass teased.

"Tarantulas aren't native to Virginia so unless it's someone's pet, it's highly unlikely," stated Zoom.

"Hmm . . . the Black Widow and Brown Recluse spiders are native to this area, and their venom is considered poisonous to humans."

Compass reached back into his side pocket, quickly pulling out the guide. "The Black Widow is black with a red hour glass shape on its abdomen. The Brown Recluse has six eyes that are positioned in pairs, making a semi circle. Neither one is our spider."

"That's a relief, I suppose," said Zoom. "Although they're really not aggressive and don't bite unless provoked."

"Maybe it's a Jumping spider!" squealed Compass. "It literally jumps to catch prey, using a dragline (a silken thread) to help it move about—like Spiderman!"

Compass' water bottle fell to the floor, startling the spider and sending what seemed like parts of it scattered across the floor.

"Spiderlings! How did we miss that clue?" shrieked Zoom.

"Let's solve this mystery! It's a hairy spider with eight eyes arranged in three rows. It's one of the few with tapetum. It lays eggs in the Fall like other hunting spiders, and it carries its babies on its back."

"A Wolf spider!" the Nature Detectives shouted together, racing up the stairs to tell Tabitha.





Habitat Restoration Report

by Joe Coleman

LWC's Habitat Restoration Committee worked to remove highly invasive, alien plant species during five work sessions over the summer. One of our summer interns, Joey Villari, organized two different work sessions to remove beautiful but highly aggressive purple loosestrife from along a stream in Round Hill. While we made significant progress both times, a lot more needs to be done to get the purple loosestrife in that area under control. We will be working on this project again next year, hopefully working with other groups.

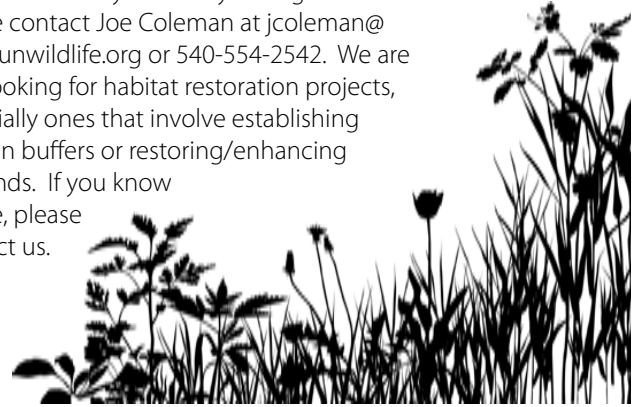
Our other summer intern, Kate Gentry, organized three work sessions on the Phillips Farm in Waterford to remove the fast-growing, invasive alien mile-a-minute from around the shrubs that were planted there on March 1. On our first visit, mile-a-minute (very aptly also known as tear-thumb) had completely covered every shrub that we had planted earlier. However, as a result of LWC's efforts, almost all of the shrubs we planted survived the summer. Because we never allowed the mile-a-minute to seed, it should be easier to control this annual plant next year.

In the future, on the advice of LWC's Stream Monitoring Chair Meg Findley, the Habitat Restoration Committee plans to concentrate on projects where stream quality can be linked to the installation of a riparian buffer or the restoration/enhancement of a wetland. Ideally, stream monitoring will help measure the effectiveness of these projects.

With that in mind the committee recommended that LWC do another **riparian-buffer planting of shrubs and invasive-alien removal on the Phillips Farm on November 15** (rain date November 22). As the project on March 1 was so enthusiastically supported, there is a lot of interest in following up this fall and doing more plantings. If you are interested in helping, contact Joe Coleman at jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org or 540-554-2542.

We are also working with the Leesburg Watershed Committee on a spring **riparian buffer project**. Over the next few months, LWC will work with the committee and representatives of the town to identify a site along a section of one of Leesburg's streams to plant a riparian buffer in early spring.

LWC is looking for a new chair for the Habitat Restoration Committee — if you think you might be interested please contact Joe Coleman at jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org or 540-554-2542. We are also looking for habitat restoration projects, especially ones that involve establishing riparian buffers or restoring/enhancing wetlands. If you know of one, please contact us.



Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy
P.O. Box 2088
Purcellville, VA 20134-2088

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